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695 because it involves too great publicity and danger of European interven-
683 tion, though they say, perhaps by way of rationalization, that the doctor
754 of the ordeal could manipulate the test. As this procedure is merely of theoretical interest, we need refer only to its salient features.

The victim or his relative privately consulted a bone-throwing doctor, whose verdict he had confirmed by perhaps two or more other doctors before he or an intermediary on his behalf made a public accusation. The ordeal or test took place at the capital and was public. Lineal relatives of accuser and accused or, according to some, two strong men chosen by them, were given an intoxicating drink by the official 'doctor of the ordeal', the spectators watching to ensure that equal quantities were administered. Those who had drunk were put in the sun and he who began moving about or became dizzy, drunken, or incoherent was in the wrong. The witch was usually executed at once, at the orders of the queen, being strangled at the river; but if she was a woman, one of the executioners first had sexual intercourse with her; and the body, tied to a weight, was sunk into the water to be eaten by animals. But the witch was sometimes delivered to the victim to undo his evil work (*hu mu bulla*), and if the illness left the victim the witch was released. Sometimes, also, suspected witches were beaten, tied up (nowadays, as we have seen, handcuffed and submitted to ridicule and abuse), and left without food or tortured with velvet stinging-beans until they confessed; this was sometimes done privately, and it was possible also to kill them without the public ordeal, the killing being reported to the queen; but usually they were merely banished.

683 The property of a witch who was killed was not all confiscated, but
754 *baza*, consisting chiefly of his cattle, was taken by the queen for division between herself and her nobles. No one else could appropriate *baza*; even the village head, if he did so, was regarded as a thief. The witch's gardens reverted to the district head, the crops were taken, not by the queen, because she could not eat the 'dirt of the witch', but by the messengers of the queen, for they were so busy in her service that they could hardly cultivate their fields. Residents in the district surreptitiously during the night took the witch's crops, but it was regarded as disgraceful to do so openly during the day. The wife of a witch was taken by a classificatory brother, and his children were adopted by the queen, who received *munywalo* when she married the girls to her nobles (in more recent times, to commoners, because the girls often deserted). In the days of the kings, all the relatives, or, as some say, only those on the mother's side—the mother's uterine brothers and sisters especially—were killed. The queens had only a uterine brother or sister killed if they failed to leave the country. The witch, unlike a murderer, could not find sanctuary in the forest of Daja; and only a witch's, not a murderer's, property was *baza*—confiscable property.

787 Since the beginning of this century submission of issues to ordeal has
695 been replaced by their submission to the smelling-out diviner (*mugome*).
[177] The institution of the *mugome* has been borrowed from the Shangana-Tonga and its whole complicated legal procedure is still in a state of flux, adjustments being constantly made especially to avoid European intervention.

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intervention. The procedure involves, first, private consultations of a doctor, followed by an accusation directly or through an intermediary, a wager by the parties, publicly made often in the *khɔrɔ*, then a journey in the company of the 'ears' (official witness) of the chief to a distant smeller-out, the actual smelling out, at which the victor may be given a buck's horn to blow on his way home, and, finally the report to chief or district head and the adjudication of the *khɔrɔ*. We are here concerned only with the legal aspects, but we must at the outset remark that the procedure, primarily used in witchcraft cases, is relied upon whenever there are evidential difficulties and, paradoxically, it has rendered theft, adultery, and other wrongs, not less, but more amenable to some form of *khɔrɔ* control. Publicity and centralized control in the phenomenal, periodical *mureu* proceedings at the capital in the old days guaranteed their effectiveness, but men could privately execute self-confessed witches. To-day, amid conflicting tendencies, *mugɔme* proceedings are less public and hardly the prerogative of the queen. Witchcraft is not conceived necessarily to strike at the whole society; it is often dealt with privately; and even, after resort to the *mugɔme*, agreement by the parties in the district courts may end the matter.

The *mugɔme* procedure lends itself to fixing responsibility when a whole district feels threatened, just as in the old days the *mureu* was used whenever the whole country wished to ward off danger. When, at a certain district gathering, it was decided to send delegates to a *mugɔme* concerning the occurrence of many deaths in the district, one young woman objected, saying, 'It is nonsense; we know the sickness is not "sent". If you go to the *mugɔme* and he "beats" (points out) members of your family, the whole district will be quarrelling.' The *mugɔme* pointed out the young woman who had objected, but she demanded that, if any one accused her, he should go with her to another *mugɔme*, and when she appealed to the capital for appointment there of the official witness, no one came forward as a direct accuser and for that reason the case broke down. Subsequent cases in which the young woman was involved reflected how the proceedings had not relieved, but aggravated, the sense of insecurity in the district. Shall we conclude that the remedy is worse than the disease? We cannot do so, because where there are no *mugɔme* proceedings, as on the highveld, the incidence of witchcraft and sorcery is not less. Moreover, *mugɔme* proceedings are believed to, and do often, remove grave threats to the community. In 1938 the tributary *morula* cider was being made at the village of the head of a sub-district. On the second day the cider frothed suspiciously and after a meeting of the sub-district, money was collected and representatives of every family went to the *mugɔme*, who found that the headman had poisoned the cider, and in truth everything pointed to the use of cattle-dip or locust poison. The matter was reported to the capital, where, without formal trial, the headman was ordered to leave the district. In our opinion a dangerous criminal had been successfully dealt with, but, what is more important, the feeling of security of the people had been restored.

We may now shortly examine some aspects of *khɔrɔ* control over *mugɔme* proceedings. The challenge, supported by a wager to submit the truth

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695 of an accusation to the *mugɔme*, is made before, during, or even after
787 *khɔrɔ* proceedings, but if the dispute is dealt with by the *khɔrɔ*, the findings of the *mugɔme* can be accorded recognition only if the official witness, the 'ears', has been previously appointed by the *khɔrɔ*; the results of a private consultation cannot be given in evidence before the *khɔrɔ*. The 'ears' is sometimes appointed by the district head of the person challenged, but the theory is sometimes advanced that only the capital has jurisdiction to do so. His integrity is an important factor, for he must relate to the *khɔrɔ* the details of the wager, the competence of the *mugɔme*, the method by which the decision was reached and its nature, and whether or not the parties consented to the decision. The 'ears' must be a disinterested person, to avoid accusations of corruption and favouritism, as well as to guarantee that there is no manipulation of the fees entrusted to him by the parties for defraying the expenses of the expedition. Integrity and impartiality are best guaranteed where the capital appoints the 'ears'.

Often enough the findings of the *mugɔme* are accorded no recognition at the capital when the parties have gone forth from a district *khɔrɔ*. This does not mean that the parties cannot agree to the verdict of the *mugɔme* at the district *khɔrɔ* where the 'ears' has been appointed; nor is there any great desire to centralize control, which is sometimes encouraged, sometimes feared, and sometimes more or less an inevitable consequence of the need to obtain passes at the capital for the journey to a distant *mugɔme*. The practice of appointing 'ears' in the districts is not unconnected with the danger of implicating the capital with the European authorities. It sometimes happens, when the parties come for a pass and a report is made at the capital, that the queen's councillors disclaim any interest or concern in the matter. Wherever the 'ears' may be appointed, he is given the *phitho* (thing to be hidden), any small article such as a snuff box or coin which is concealed and must be named and found by the *mugɔme* as a test of his competence before the divination begins.

Khɔrɔ control is evident also in the manner in which it may refuse its assistance or dissuade the parties from going to the *mugɔme*, even though it can come to no decision in the dispute. The attitude of the *khɔrɔ* may be manifested in many ways, and its aim in refusing assistance is much the same as that of the queen when she intervenes behind the scenes in the interests of reconciliation by forbidding the publicity of *mugɔme* proceedings. We shall refer to a few only of the cases we have witnessed. A recruiter used to pay all labourers recruited £2, which had to be paid into the tribal fund before the tribal 'secretary' issued a pass to the labourer. For reasons we need not detail, the 'secretary' gave the labourer no receipt and the recruiter sued the 'secretary'. This is precisely the kind of case that the *khɔrɔ* finds very difficult to handle and, as the 'secretary' was a Christian, not amenable to *mugɔme* proceedings, the recruiter challenged the labourer to go to a *mugɔme*. But the *khɔrɔ* disallowed the challenge on the ground that the transaction had occurred in daylight, and instead ordered recruiter and 'secretary' jointly to pay the £2.

The *khɔrɔ*, by refusing to appoint 'ears', can prevent submission of a

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dispute to the *mugɔme* or it may send back the parties to their district head for him to appoint the 'ears', the purpose often being to tire them out or to exhaust their resources, so that they will more easily come to an agreement. But the opposite often happens: the *khɔrɔ*, tired of the obstinacy of the parties, may tell them to submit their differences to a *mugɔme*. Mudali complained that Uumme, mother of Muloi, was spreading rumours that he had caused Muloi's illness. Muloi was known to be a witch who had killed two of her brothers-in-law, sons of Makhulu, and Makhulu had with the aid of a great specialist 'sent back' a terrible illness which was rotting great holes in Muloi's body. But Uumme could not proceed against this legitimate revenge and, as it was rumoured that Mudali was a lover of Muloi, Uumme attempted to inculpate Mudali. These facts were generally known, but were not disclosed in the *khɔrɔ*. Mudali said that his accusers knew that he had no medicines and to clear his name he challenged Uumme to go to a *mugɔme* with him. Uumme retorted that she resented the insult from an adulterer, and the *khɔrɔ*, fearing that the conflict would spread, advised the disputants to go back to their district head and there arrange to go to the *mugɔme*. 'Ears' was appointed and early one morning we all stood ready at Mudali's village, with food for a long journey, perhaps 100 miles; messages and counter-messages passed to and fro between the villages of Mudali and Uumme, but nothing happened; and the following Sunday the case was again in the *khɔrɔ* of the capital. Uumme's people said that, as they had made no direct accusation, they refused to go to the *mugɔme*, but the *khɔrɔ* retorted, 'If Muloi dies, you must not blame Mudali. Now pay him the "cutter of the tongue" (which silences the mouth), for if Muloi dies the Europeans will come.' Uumme refused, and Mudali, satisfied that his name had been cleared, allowed the matter to be dropped.

The *khɔrɔ* or the queen may dissuade the parties from resorting to the *mugɔme*. Siga accused Maidi—they were co-wives—of having removed a tooth from Siga's child, who died, and of inserting it into the mouth of Maidi's baby. Maidi's relatives advised her to challenge Siga, but the queen, calling Maidi to her, said, 'I cannot support you. The witchcraft may be that even of your mother. Let the matter be.' And her advice was accepted. Similarly the *khɔrɔ* discourages unfounded accusations among members of the family, curbs the inclination to squabble, and in various ways attempts to prevent the challenge which so readily rises to the lips of angry relatives. A young married woman, accusing her mother-in-law of harassing her with familiars, fled to her parents, who, when the mother-in-law came to call her back, imputed to her the death of the children of a relative of theirs. The mother-in-law brought an action, but, as is usual when there is danger of *munywalo* and family entanglements, the *khɔrɔ* quashed the case as nonsense (*zwitshele*) and sent the parties home to compose their differences by *ku khuxelwa*. Tsezi, instigated by his mother-in-law, who had a family quarrel with Dali, accused the latter of sending the lightning which had struck down a tree near his village, but the district head stopped the challenge from being submitted to a *mugɔme* by dismissing the case as unfounded gossip. Sagani, whose

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695 787 adultery with his father's young wife was exposed by her, accused her of causing his son's death but the *khɔrɔ* told him to beg pardon with a goat, which would also serve as the 'cutter of the tongue'. When uterine sisters challenged one another before the *khɔrɔ* the men ridiculed them, saying, 'Who has ever heard of uterine sisters bewitching one another'—not a very conclusive argument, but sufficient for the purpose in hand. When Mabula, the cattle-linked sister, was called to squirt water (*hu phasa*) for the sick child of her brother, she construed the summons as an accusation of witchcraft, for to call another (not a close relative) to perform this rite is one method of imputing witchcraft; but Mabula's husband intervened in the *khɔrɔ*, explained how his wife and her brother by their quarrels were breaking up his home, and suggested that they beg pardon of one another. The *khɔrɔ* agreed and averted the challenge.

Even if the parties had been to the *mugɔme* with the official witness the *khɔrɔ* is not absolutely bound. In the old days, it is said, the *khɔrɔ* allowed argument as if the divination of the *mugɔme* was not infallible and if the parties were not satisfied the *khɔrɔ* could on the initiative of one of them send them to a second *mugɔme*. To-day, despite the theory that the *mugɔme* is infallible, the old practice persists. We have seen many arguments on the merits and many reversals of the findings of the *mugɔme*. These findings may be attacked on the grounds of irregularities in the procedure, such as separation of the parties when they were on the journey, corruption of the 'ears', incompetence of the *mugɔme* who failed to find the *phitho* or to indicate correctly the group or totem names of all the parties, dissatisfaction of the one party with the findings at the séance, confusion of the bones by medicines 'thrown' at home, and many others. When there is a conflict between the evidence or a presumption (such as, in adultery cases, the presumption that a woman's evidence is almost as reliable as the bones) and the findings of the *mugɔme*, there is no telling which way the ultimate verdict will go. The cases in which these conflicts have occurred are too complicated for adequate handling here, largely because the primary object of the *khɔrɔ* is appeasement of the parties and reconciliation of what appear to be incongruous institutions.

There are other aspects of the procedure that have great legal interest—for example, the principles governing vicarious representation of challenger and challenged before the *mugɔme* and the right of the person vicariously smelt out to appeal for a second expedition of which he is a party, the rule as to the conduct of the parties on the journey, the requirement of the *khɔrɔ* that it can take cognizance, not of gossip or general rumour, but only a specific accusation by a specific challenger, and many others. We shall touch upon two further points only.

695 791 Firstly the *mugɔme* is always a Shangana-Tonga and lives far away. Litigants from other tribes come to Vuloyedu, but the Lovedu generally say that they are going to Phafuli, on the borders of Portuguese East Africa. The theory is that the more distant the *mugɔme* the more reliable his verdict will be. But distance also safeguards the diviner from the vengeance that neighbours might take, shifts the incidence of distasteful responsibilities from the *khɔrɔ* and eliminates strife between the two

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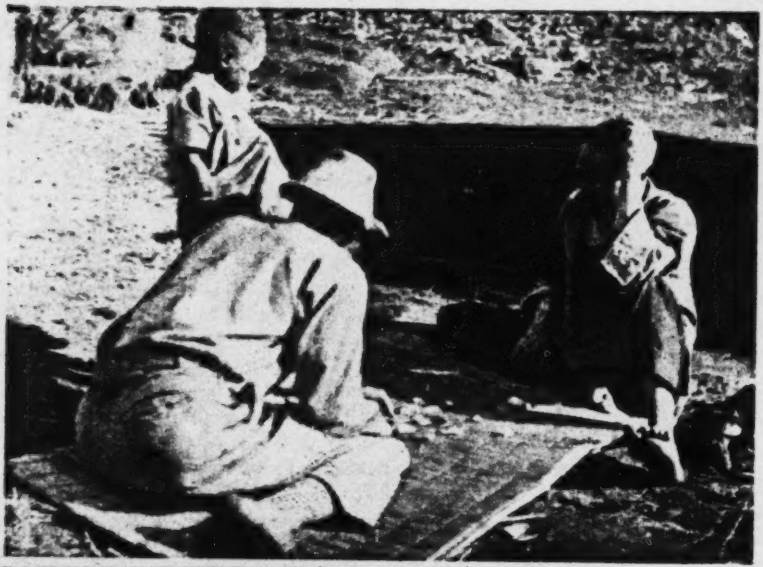

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XIV. THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH

(*a*) DIAGNOSING THE CAUSE OF ILLNESS

(*b*) THE KHADI POURS BEER TO APPEASE THE ANCESTORS

[facing p 209]

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powerful jurisdictions, the *khɔrɔ* and the *mugɔme*. The *mugɔme*, great though his powers be, holds a precarious position in the modern world. His fees are not fixed, but the usual amount is £1 2*s*. 6*d*., though it may be 5*s*. or more for each person of the party. Much of his technique is directed towards preventing the consultants from giving him away to the European authorities. 'If you say I am a liar,' declared one *mugɔme* to the parties, 'take back your money and go elsewhere. I even challenge you to take me to the Europeans; they will agree with me, as I have a licence to divine.' In another case a *mugɔme* refused to find any one guilty. 'You force me,' he said, 'to smell out the witch, but you have left him at home. The other diviners who smelt out this man [the challenged person] are all wrong. And you [the challenger], if you wish to settle the dispute, must place a head of cattle as a sacred beast to wake up your grandfather.' But this finding did not persuade the parties to withdraw their case from the *khɔrɔ*, and the *khɔrɔ*, ignoring the finding, settled the matter in its own way.

Secondly, the wager is not made by way of an oath, but it is sometimes reduced to writing: 'They bet four head of cattle' (*va bɛjije khomu je nne*); that is all. The tiny slip of paper is kept by the 'ears'. The use of the term *hu bɛja* shows, as the people say, that the wager is a new conception. But we cannot be certain that the wager has been borrowed from Europeans. It fits the whole complex of judicial process: its essence is consent of the parties to be bound by their wager and by the findings of the *mugɔme*. If one of the parties disagrees with these findings, he is entitled to demand back the money paid to the *mugɔme* and ask the party to go further to another *mugɔme*. The *khɔrɔ* may, however, vary the bet. The victor comes to the *khɔrɔ* and blows his horn; and the women ululate and dance (*hu pɛbɛla*, which by extension also means to be acquitted or declared innocent by ordeal or *mugɔme*). Meanwhile the vanquished party goes home and, if he is contrite, he says that he could not help doing wrong. Next day he might appear in the *khɔrɔ*, ask for time to pay or *khumɛlɛa* or send an old man to plead for a reduction of the bet. The victor pretends to refuse, but in the end, if the *khɔrɔ* presses him, he will agree. Or the *khɔrɔ* may, on its own initiative, reduce the bet. Everything depends on the circumstances. Where the mother of a man was alleged to have killed the wife of his elder brother (the challenger), the *mugɔme's* verdict was against the mother, but as he had said that she was not a born witch, but had only purchased the medicine from another, the *khɔrɔ* awarded the challenger two head of cattle instead of the six actually wagered. The bet is often not paid in full, while sometimes nothing at all is exacted as the 'cutter of the tongue' of the slanderer. But we have seen cases in which the *khɔrɔ* has, at the suggestion of one party, raised a wager from four to six head of cattle.

This is not the place to discuss the interrelations of the tribal and the European systems. For one thing, the subject requires a volume to itself. But it is necessary to insist that in criminal matters the system of Native courts is by European law essentially an integral part of the European structure. In 1934 Mujaji was given criminal jurisdiction in respect of offences punishable under Native law, but fines are limited to two head

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classification. Practice is characterized by vagueness and a very wide and loose, instead of a specific, use of many of these terms. The term *khitshipidi* denotes primarily a swelling or tumour containing white matter. In practice we have found it applied to scrofula or glandular swellings below the ear, which were cut open and squeezed, to slime coughed up and said to be internal *khitshipidi*, and to general aching of all the teeth or tenderness of the gums with no sign of matter. Similarly the term *ŋɔbɛ*, bleeding of the nose, is often applied when there is no bleeding, but general debility, in which case the trouble is thought to be caused by blood in the body that should, but has not, come out. Such false correlations are due not merely to wrong conceptions of cause and effect—any evidence suggesting the presence of blood suffices to incriminate that arch enemy of health—but also to careless observation and loose reasoning. This laxity in medical conceptions is in marked contrast to the logic and coherence of other arrangements of the society. Inaccurate observation and undeveloped symptomatology must be attributed to the extensive reliance, firstly, for diagnosis of all but the most everyday illness upon the divining dice, and, secondly, for curing upon what in the last resort is the psychological rather than the physical.

Lovedu therapeutics includes a number of treatments that have undoubted curative value, but many more are based on purely magical assumptions. On the whole, those which we should consider to be of some medical value are chiefly home remedies of the humble non-divining herbalist. The higher one goes in the medical scale, the more divorced from scientific principles become the treatments. Simple ailments are dealt with very much as among Europeans: sniffing up water is used for colds, the milk of a certain euphorbia is supplied to draw out deep-lying thorns; splints of strips of wood are used for broken limbs or sprains; teeth are extracted by being levered up by means of an instrument like a poker, which is inserted between the roots, a method said to be no more painful than the clumsy use of European forceps. Very detrimental to the speedy recovery of wounds is, however, the practice of scraping or washing off all matter before each application of healing powders. This destroys the new young tissues, delaying for months the healing of sores that normally takes weeks or even days. Use of enemas is unknown and emetics are not nearly as common as among the Zulu. With the Lovedu as with us the commonest treatment is the drinking of medicines. Instead, however, of the bottle of medicine we receive, a Native is given a small bundle of roots or twigs cut into even lengths to take home and boil in water which is drunk or used for making a soft porridge. Sometimes the medicine is bruised and a cold infusion made. There is none of the careful measurement of quantities characteristic of the mediaeval apothecary or of prescriptions found on Egyptian papyri, but the amounts used are not wholly undetermined, for in practice the smallest pot is used and 1 to 2½ pints of water are added; the dose seldom exceeds a few mouthfuls taken once or twice a day for a few days only. If this is not effective, something else will be tried. Wet cupping is a common home remedy, as the numerous scars on head and shoulders of people testify. After scarification, a cupping horn is applied, the narrow

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753 after the funeral. *Makhuma* also affects possessed people who fail to use their powdered medicine with the first-fruits.

Though usually associated with the stomach, the symptoms of *makhuma* are not very definite, diagnosis being chiefly *ex post facto*. If one child has died, any illness its successor might have, even beating of the fontanelle, is liable to be attributed to *makhuma*. After the miscarriage of Madume's wife, Dwagu, a non-related inmate of the same village, did not trouble to be purified when the doctor came; but when, shortly afterwards, his stomach became upset, he immediately attributed it to *makhuma* and hastened to take medicine for its removal.

• [787] The conception of *khuma* has been extended into other fields. Divining bones *khuma* at the end of each month as well as when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again.

[789] Similarly the rain charms of the queen are liable to *khuma* (or *figchcla*) unless given the first-fruits and the first termites of the year to 'bite' (*luma*) before any one else in the royal area eats them, as also when certain people neglect certain observances, such as burial in wet soil of infants dying before their teeth have appeared. *Hu khuma* of the rain charms has serious consequences, causing drought throughout the country. That Christians do not observe these regulations has as little effect on the rain as when Europeans do not conform.

753 826 *Hu fesa*, or the state of being 'hot', is a conception far wider than *muridi* or *makhuma* and is the antithesis of the condition of coolness which is conceived of as healthy, propitious, or right. The properties of this 'heat', which may be caused in a variety of ways, are not unlike physical heat. Bodily illness, even *muridi*, causes the blood to be 'hot' or to be 'boiling' and may be treated by 'cooling' the body: thus the *khitshila* ceremony, which removes the 'dirt' of death, also 'cools' people. The hair of near relatives is shaved with medicine and put in a wet place or in certain kinds of drought-resisting plants. But it is usually the source of the 'heat', not the 'heat' itself, the symptom of the disease, that is treated, though both may be dealt with. The blood of a woman in certain conditions—for example, after an abortion—is said to 'burn', she has (or is) *lesua* (great burning), and the man who has sexual intercourse with her also 'burns', but whether it is because the 'heat' is conducted to him or because of the disease, *ɖere* (coughing illness) or urethritis, which he contracts, is by no means clear. The treatment is directed at the disease in him, not towards counteracting the 'heat'. Often after steaming a patient, a river stone is pressed against all joints of the body and then taken back to the river, a treatment in which we may discern an attempt to 'cool', though it also contains the conception of 'throwing out'.

821 766 Since heat withers the vegetation and causes drought, it is opposed to rain. Precautions must therefore be taken against whatever is thought to cause the country to be hot and dry. A man succumbing to *ɖere*, a person struck by lightning, a woman dying in childbirth, and the foetus of a miscarriage—all these must be buried in wet soil or with rain medicine if the country is to be kept 'cool' and the rains are to fall. Coolness connotes rightness. Charms protecting the village against witches are 754 sometimes called *mashɔthɔjɔ*, because they *rɔthɔja* (cause to be cool,

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755 aside pieces of meat for his spirit, and a *mugɔme* always has his special
791 shrine where he reports all money professionally earned. An ordinary doctor sometimes has a shrine where he places horns of goats received or hangs medicine bags when he prays to the spirits, but many do not have these things. To a doctor his divination is like a craft that he has learnt, and he gives offerings only when scarcity of clients is attributed to the displeasure of the gods. When about to divine, he begs the bones to tell him the truth, not the ancestors for guidance.

787 The divinatory dice constitute the chief diagnostic method. The
755 Lovedu set is fairly stereotyped, consisting of about forty pieces, most but not all of which are bones; the bones and *hakati* shells (oval-shaped stones of a fruit) of the Shangana-Ṭonga *mugɔme* are somewhat different. Dominating the usual Lovedu set are four flat pieces of ivory or bone, two male and two female, which fall in sixteen different combinations, the cardinal positions. Each position has its own name and its own praise referring, though vaguely, to its meaning; and it is these four pieces from which the general configuration of influences or prognostications is read. There are other sets of four: pieces from the ventral surface of a tortoise, each with two easily distinguishable sides, and shells, two Oliva standing for males and two Cyraea standing for females. Having thrown the dice, the diviner looks first at the ivory pieces and gives the praise of their disposition, which indicates the general situation, say, dissension, loss, or complaints of the father's sister. But this general situation must be related to the lie of certain other bones, particularly *malope*, the knuckle-bone of the steenbuck (*Raphiceros campestus*), from which, as representing the chief, the diviner next orientates the situation. The procedure thereafter involves linking this situation, on the one hand, with events or specific prognostications of good or evil and, on the other, with people playing a part in these events. *Thakadu* or *mudimo*, the talus of the antbear, represents the ancestors, who, like the antbear, live underground, shows whether they are angry or not, and is diagnostic of the health or life of a person which in the last resort lies in ancestral hands. *Dau*, the phalanx of the lion (or in some sets *ŋgwe*, the phalanx of the tiger) which is also a pointing bone showing direction, *phiri*, the knee-bone of the hyena, of which there may be two, male and female, and *tshweni*, male and female kneebones of the baboon, all stand for the evil power of witches and their familiars. The baboon bones, in addition, indicate, by the side on which they fall, danger or illness on a journey, suitability of the spot for building upon and, in case of barrenness, whether or not a child will be born. Every set contains two morula pips with functions less specific, depending as they do upon the whole configuration of forces or events, and a river pebble, *lemɛja la gwena*, the thing swallowed by a crocodile, which is diagnostic of *khileso*, the illness caused by foreign substances which sorcerers cause their victims to swallow with food or drink.

To bring these evil or good influences into relation with specific people, to determine who is ill or who is bewitching the consultants, the diviner turns to certain astralagus bones, capable of falling on four sides and representing people. Two or three sheep bones stand for important

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or respected persons, such as district or village heads, and goat bones, numbering two to six, for mere commoners—a real separation of sheep and goats. If there are two goat bones, they represent male and female; a third represents a child; four bones extends the range to male and female children, and the further two bones differentiate widow and bachelor. Different totems are shown by bones of the animals revered. Lovedu sets have two (male and female) *maḍavu* (rietbuck) bones standing for the Crocodile totemic group; two *phala* (rooibuck) bones for Khalaga and sometimes also Lovedu; two *golove* (wild boar) for Lovedu, two *phudi* (duiker) for Khaha and Koni; two *shɔshɔ* (bushbuck) for the Tshadzi of Mavulana; and in areas in which there are Phalavorwa and Thavina also two *nogo* (porcupine). Elephants and lions are represented by the bones of these animals. These totem-indicating bones vary greatly according to the people with whom the diviner comes into most contact. Many diviners have one or two extra pieces, such as a shell or a stone found in a strange place. Malematsha, for instance, has a piece of chalk from France, where he served in the labour battalion during the Great War.

The detailed rules of divination are far too complicated for treatment in a general ethnographical study, but a few general principles, common knowledge to all in the society, may be mentioned. Firstly, it is the side on which the bones fall rather than their disposition to one another that is important. All the pieces can fall in two ways, either positive, dorsal, or negative, ventral surface up, while in addition the astralagi have two narrower surfaces, one, the concave side, with a deeper cleft than the other, the convex side. In the normal position, with dorsal side up, the power the bone stands for is said to be active, the person it represents well or walking in the direction it is lying; in the reverse position, with ventral side up, it is sleeping, powerless or dead and hence, when the people represented are witches, a good sign, for they are then on their backs and harmless. An astralagus lying on its convex side with the cleft up shows laughing, happiness, talking, or even quarrelling (much talking), and with convex side up, anger, complaints, sadness. Secondly, the significance of these positions and particularly of the combinations of the sets of four bones varies according to the purpose of the divination: a particular position means one thing when it is illness, another when it is a building site that is in question. Thirdly, despite intricate rules, divination is in the last resort not an exact science, but an interpretation in which the diviner's ingenuity, his knowledge of human nature and his estimate of the interplay of motives in the society play an important part. In this connexion, the praises of each bone and of various positions have an unsuspected function. These praises are not trade secrets and are fairly generally known; to be word-perfect is unnecessary and parts may be recited or omitted, while half may be uttered at one moment and the remainder much later. This occupies the mind of the client and gives the diviner time to think and orientate himself. Moreover, interpretation abounds with metaphorical expressions, as does the parlance of European fortune-tellers with club-men and diamond-girls. Many Lovedu diviners, imitating the *mugome*, use a peculiar chant, half Shangana-Tonga, half

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787 Sotho, a jargon difficult to understand and reinterpreted by the doctor or
755 by some one of the party more conversant than the client with the procedure.

The procedure in divination is a subtle process combining suggestion, free association of ideas, and techniques of leading the client and inspiring confidence in the diviner. On opening the bags, the doctor pours out the dice and watches how they fall, but he does not always vouchsafe anything at this stage. Before casting his dice, he chews a piece of root (*khirugulu*), which he blows out on to the bones: both he and the bones are thereby given insight and power. Then, taking them in both hands and uttering a praise by way of encouragement, he casts them on to the floor or on the mat provided. At this stage he reads the cardinal positions, perhaps elaborating on the general trend indicated, and suggests what the client has come to consult him about, often in so doing eliciting some information. Thereafter the client himself throws the bones, speaking to them as dictated by the doctor; the practice of bringing a piece of rag breathed upon by the patient is not known, but the consultant may be directed to mention the patient's name. The client will have to cast many times till the trouble has been thrashed out. The next step is for the doctor, after suggesting a remedy, to cast the bones and interpret their reply to the suggestion. Whatever the cause of the illness, the first suggestion is always placation of the ancestors and thereafter medicines and treatments. At each throw only some of the dice are studied, the position of the others being irrelevant to the immediate purpose. Sometimes it takes long (often as we have seen, over two hours or a whole afternoon) for the bones to give a clear indication and, if they fall in unreadable combinations, various causes may be assigned: the bones may not have been properly 'washed'; or a condition precedent to effective divination may have been omitted, such as in one case we witnessed, when the consultant's people had not yet held the removal of 'dirt' (*khitshila*) ceremony after the death of a child; or the bones may unaccountably 'refuse'.

To illustrate the procedure, we give an actual case of divination simplified by the omission of the praises. Ramatiti, the doctor, had just finished divining for Dumedi when Dwagu, Dumedi's friend who lived some ten miles away, came upon the scene and, handing over his 1*s*. to the doctor, asked that the dice be thrown for him. Ramatiti poured out the bones, looked at them, but remained silent. He then chewed a piece of *khirugulu*, took the bones in both hands, spat on them and, mumbling a praise, cast them. 'They have fallen *muferegere*' (a position meaning dissension), he said, uttering the relevant praise. 'You have been greatly troubled,' he continued, enlarging upon the greatness of the trouble. 'The tortoise bones lie *mutagola*' (indicating long illness), he added. 'You suffer from "blood" and intestinal trouble. Do you have dreams?' 'Yes,' replied Dwagu, 'chiefly about dead people.' '*Tshweni*' (the baboon bones), went on the doctor, 'are full [lie on their convex side]; your sickness is on the chest.' Thereupon Dwagu was given the bones to throw and told to repeat after the doctor a praise of the bones: 'Tell us you spy with eyes that see, tell us why we are afflicted; whether it be a god or whether it be

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a witch, tell us.' When the bones had fallen. Ramatiti asked, 'Do you know any *gwena* [man of the Crocodile totem]? Are your in-laws Crocodile?' 'No,' replied Dwagu, 'I know only neighbours, not relatives, who are Crocodile.' After Dwagu had denied that he had quarrelled with these people, the doctor warned him not to drink beer with them, and when he objected, 'But we are always drinking together', the doctor said. 'It is they who have given you *khileso*.' Dwagu was doubtful, but replied, 'I remember that once, when I came out of the *gomana* "school", a son of those neighbours gave me monkey nuts and afterwards my stomach was upset.'

Dwagu threw the bones again and the doctor asked him if he were troubled by matter in the ears. Dwagu admitted that both his ears were affected and added, 'That is how the trouble began, and I have tried many remedies in vain.' The doctor now had a substantial clue. 'The ears are causing blood on the chest', he said. 'Has a *lelɔpɔ* doctor tried to cure you?' 'No,' Dwagu replied. 'Only a woman who was one day called for my mother.' The bones were once more thrown to determine whether the woman would succeed if she were called again. The *malope* bone lay on its back and with *dau* and *phiri* upside down, showing the power of the witches to be broken, and *golovɛ* (wild boar) in its normal position, the doctor declared that Dwagu would recover. But, though it was silently passed over, the diviner was mistaken in thinking that his client was of the *golovɛ* totem. Again Dwagu threw the dice and the question asked, viz. whether he should offer to (*suma*) his dead father, was answered in the negative; but though *phiri* (hyena) and *tshweni* (baboon) lay powerless, the positive position of the lion (*dau*), associated with witches, indicated that the stomach-ache would remain. 'Have you bilharzia?' inquired the doctor. 'No.' 'Well, then, do you enjoy your beer?' 'No,' was the reply. 'But one calabash fills my stomach; I can't drink much.' Another throw, this time by the doctor, was favourable to the medicine mentioned as a cure. 'But,' asked the doctor, as he scrutinized the bones, 'what child at home is ill?' When Dwagu said it was his, the doctor congratulated himself on his perspicacity and could not resist following up his success.

Dwagu thus had to cast the dice about his child. The doctor diagnosed *zwiso* (sores), a vague term covering external rashes or sores of all kinds, as well as internal trouble, and a common complaint of children. 'Yes,' replied Dwagu. 'The sores are in its mouth,' adding a full account of the complaint. The *khilumɛ* goat bone (indicating a young male person) was lying positive, so the doctor said, 'It is a boy,' but again he was wrong. Unperturbed, the doctor now threw the dice, having suggested the cure, 'Dung of witches (metaphorical for the insectivorous bat) and mice and moss hanging from trees. Burn one portion holding the child in the smoke and smear its body with the other portion. Tell us, you spy with eyes that see. I say let the fowl (child) be well.' But the bone standing for a small girl fell on its back: the medicine would not succeed. Again the doctor threw, mentioning different ingredients, but similar treatment, and this time the bones were propitious.

The doctor is an important person in the society, not because his

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787 755 practice brings him wealth, but because disease is a matter of ever-present interest. He is paid chiefly in beer, which provides entertainment for friends and neighbours, payer and payee, and enhances his prestige. The family doctor usually receives nothing at all, but is called to beer that is drunk in the family. Diviners receive the 1*s.* or fowl for divination and perhaps, if they are mercenary or have taken great pains about the medicine, 5*s.* for opening the medicine bags; but payment for treatment is made only for successful cures. A patient should on recovery not shave his head before bringing beer to the doctor, when the 'hair of his illness' is shaved, perhaps with medicine by the doctor and taken to a hollow tree, where it is left with the words 'Sickness remain there'; but this rule is, as often as not, observed in the breach. The correct charge for curing barrenness or epilepsy is £1 or £1 10*s.*, yet we have seen many cures of barrenness for which only beer was given. The means of the patient and his relationship to the doctor are material factors. *Lelɔpɔ* doctors are usually mercenary, requiring a goat for most of their treatments and fining patients who shave their heads without permission. *Mugɔme* are the wealthiest doctors, receiving anything from £1 to £7 at one sitting. Many set up temporary villages along the roads to catch clients, and one living in Portuguese East Africa has a lorry for transporting clients from the Transvaal lowveld to his home. The *mugɔme* exacts full payment before he divines; other doctors have to wait until the cure is effected. A doctor never goes to court about his fees, but he sometimes threatens to cover up the holes where he dug the medicines to call back illness upon the patient.

When medicines are not effective, it is etiquette to acquaint the doctor with the fact before going to a second doctor, but this etiquette is not always observed. Health is the quest of every one at all times, and disease is the most persistent and dangerous enemy of the individual; for the causes of illness are incalculable and even the most harmless disease may let in the witch to strike at his victim. The office of the doctor is both important and honourable, for he is the guardian of the people's welfare. There is no oath that binds him to loyalty and integrity, but these things are expected of him; he even preserves the secrets of his clients and, though the *mugɔme* advertises himself, such action by a doctor is regarded as derogatory.

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769 which royal ancestors only can withhold; differences in the harvest
241 between one area and another are often attributed to fights between the
782 witches of the two areas, and even variations in yield between one man's field and his neighbour's may be due to witchcraft. Yet one finds in prayers many a request for a good harvest, even though there are no special ceremonies devoted to this end. A man pouring a libation for a sick child said among other things, 'Give us corn; when we plough let us also reap. Why are you stinting us?' And it is significant that the only regular religious observance is the harvest offering of beer made of each year's new corn in villages where there are shrines or dedicated animals. When any one dies, there is thought to be danger that the fertility of the [764] crops will depart with him or her. Hence, when a gourd of seeds of every kind is placed in the grave together with a firebrand and calabash of water for the journey, some of the seeds are scattered over the body with the words, 'Do not depart with all the corn and seeds,' and very often the grain belonging to the deceased is treated with medicine in order that it may remain fertile.

769 Above all, the ancestors complain, a fact which lies at the basis of
782 Lovedu religion, for by far the greater proportion of religious rites are those performed in response to ancestral complaints. One might at first think it strange that the gods, in life just ordinary, well-disposed people, should in death be so liable to bring trouble upon their kin. Sometimes it is thought to be a sign of love: when Masilu's grandmother had made him ill because she wanted a goat dedicated to her, his mother said, 'No wonder his *gogo* seized him. She was always so fond of him.' But chiefly it is the nature of ancestors to complain; as the Lovedu phrase it, 'When people sleep (i.e. are dead), they ought to complain' (*Hɛ vathu va khi lala fase va swanɛɛ hu velɛala*). When there is illness, they are, as it is phrased, 'seen in the divining bones'; it is they who sometimes 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult childbirth, and sometimes, but far less than among the Nguni, their complaints cause dreams. Our close friend
• [787] Walter, coming to seek work in Johannesburg, dreamt disturbing dreams of his dead father, who appeared to say that he was needed at home. He thereupon returned home and, when he arrived, his mother took him to a doctor, whose bones declared that the dead father was annoyed at not having been told of the journey to town and had to be appeased (*hu phasa*). Walter was well educated, but he had failed in his last examination and felt doubly frustrated. He had great ambitions of reforming the political system of the tribe, from which his education had divorced him, and in town he was dissatisfied that nothing was open to him but the unskilled work of his uneducated compatriots.

769 An ancestor may complain about the way he has been buried, and if he
782 has died far from home, may demand to be 'brought back home' in a
778 ceremony in which, besides the dedication of a beast or goat, a goat is killed and eaten, its bones being buried as though it were a person. But this 'bringing home', involving the making of a shrine, applies only to those dying at a distance and does not resemble the 'bringing home' of the Zulu, among whom it is part of death ceremonial. At times the gods complain of neglect. But in the majority of cases no definite reason for

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754 683 787 Accusation of a specific person may lead to *khɔrɔ* proceedings,[1] which involve, as described elsewhere, the appointment of the 'ears', who receives a goat or 10s. from each party as well as provisions, a wager of a head of cattle, or £1 10s. or more, and payment, the vanquished eventually to reimburse the victor, of £1 10s. or more, as the fee of the *mugɔme*. Occasionally in practice, if accused does not demand to have his innocence proved, the accuser does not go to court and the matter is left. All victims of witchcraft do not act in the same manner. One man proceeds to a specific accusation the very first time he is harmed, another only if the same witch has been responsible for many evils; if the witch is a great rival or personal enemy, the victim more readily resorts to action, but a commoner, unless he is prepared to leave the district, will be careful to avoid accusing his district head or a relative of the queen. A victim never makes an accusation without previous private consultation with a number of doctors and often even a *mugɔme* as well, and the accusation is conveyed to the witch, either directly by the victim or indirectly by his intermediary, and usually in metaphorical language. In case of illness, the witch may be invited to 'come and *phasa* for our patient' or, in case of death, to 'come and shave us', duties which only special relatives can perform; or, more directly, he may be asked 'to come with us to consult the bones'. The accused will then demand to go to a *mugɔme* to clear his name; if he does nothing, but merely remains inactive, his accuser may proceed further and take the case to the *khɔrɔ*.

When proceeding to a smeller-out, the parties have no definite destination. They set out in a north-easterly direction, where *megɔme* abound, usually with the intention of going somewhere very far away. After a day or two, however, they grow tired, or the official witness complains of the heat, and they find some one nearer. The witness has on his person an object called *phitho* that has been given to him by the court or at the royal village. This the smeller-out has to name and find, and it is said that, unless, in addition, he is able to give the totem of every one in the party and clearly to distinguish between accuser, accused, and official witness, they will pass on to some one else. How far this is carried out in practice we shall see later. It is sometimes said by Europeans that smellers-out have spies who bring them the information necessary for their divining. This would, however, be impossible: not only do people come from all directions or tribes, sometimes as far distant as Mapulaneng beyond the Olifants River, but it would require an elaborate system of espionage that could hardly be kept secret from the people in the conditions that obtain in Bantu society. Moreover, the methods employed by smellers-out make such a system unnecessary. There is no doubt that *megɔme* are clever, and we have ourselves been amazed at the manner in which, under test conditions, a *mugɔme* was able to name and find an object hidden on our person. But it must be borne in mind that they use a trial-and-error technique based upon the responses of the audience. Of course, the presence of a European is always a disturbing factor, but in our experience, after the first few responses, the *mugɔme* begins to speak more and more loudly and quickly and a situation of free association of ideas and great suggestiveness arises. The consultants

[1] [Accusation of witchcraft, see Cat. 116, pp. 203–4. —Analyst]

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become less guarded and the *mugɔme*, skilled in his art, is able to draw conclusions from their reactions. A good deal of vagueness is permissible: the term *mukhalaga*, for example, can refer to a number of different totems: *mukhalaga* proper, *mukhalaga munyai*, *mukhalaga ɖou* (elephant), and this applies also to other aspects of their divination. An actual example, albeit a case of theft, not witchcraft, will elucidate the methods employed.

Mudana accused Bodile, his half-brother's son, of stealing £9. The case had been tried first at home, and then at the Native Commissioner's, where it had been dismissed owing to insufficient evidence. The parties decided to go to a smeller-out. On the second day of their journey, when they were resting under a tree to enable the official witness to take off his jacket, a small boy standing some way off said to them, 'There is a *mugɔme* over there.' He was a decoy watching the road to direct people to a diviner who had lately arrived and set up a temporary village of rough huts. Deciding that it was too hot to go further, the party followed the boy and sat down outside the village fence. A man approached them and, after ascertaining how much money they had to offer, showed them into an enclosure of old sacks. At the entrance stood the diviner himself, holding a stick under which the four of them were made to pass in single file. Diviners are said quite frequently to test their clients in some such manner; sometimes they are made to jump over a furrow and it is said the guilty man usually falls in.

When they had seated themselves on the ground, the diviner asked first of all for his money. The official witness handed him £1 5s., but he insisted on 10s. more, because, he said, it was a difficult case—one that had been much tried in other courts. Stick in hand, but without the use of any divining bones, the diviner began asking the party to respond (*hu vuma*). '*Ya vuma*,' they replied, and he proceeded with his chanting in a mixture of Sotho and Shangana-Tonga in sing-song phrases, at the end of which the clients had to assent. 'You have come from home on a matter', he began. Pointing to the official witness, he said, 'You have accused this boy (pointing to Bodile) of witchcraft. No. I'm making a mistake on purpose. You have not come for this reason.' Looking into a large shell, he continued, 'You have come on a different errand. You have come about money. The sum concerned is £30. No. It is £15. No. It is £10. The owner of the money sells hemp.' Continuing in this manner in short phrases, to which the party responded '*Ya vuma*,' and, suggesting first this, then that, he eventually said, 'I don't like to cause brothers by the same father to fight. Your quarrel is a vain one. The money was stolen by a woman of the Crocodile totem living near your village. She has not yet used the money.' Pointing to Bodile, he said, '*You*, why do you want to kill *him* [Mudana], and you [Mudana] be careful. They may kill you with medicines they have just bought.' Turning to the official witness, he demanded, 'Give me my *phitho* (hidden object). What kind of thing is this which is hidden from me? It is a snuff-box. No. It is a half-crown. No. It is a penny. No. It is European iron. If you think I am telling lies, take out of your left-hand pocket the thing which you have been given.' The official witness took out of

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787 his pocket the battery of a torch. He doubted the competence of a diviner who had been so vague about the nature of the object—'European iron' can be any metal object—but the main thing was that Bodile and Mudana were satisfied and so the party went home, relieved that it was an outsider who was found to be the culprit.

Objectively considered, this seance may appear naïve, but the parties, and even an outsider who was present, did not think so. There was no initial and formal identification of accuser, accused, and 'ears' which one expects from theoretical accounts; but forms and procedures are never set, and it is not unusual for these identifications to emerge later as the divination proceeds. It is by theoretical standards necessary that the *mugɔme*, as a test of his competence, should name the totem or other groups of the consultants, but in this case the parties did not even notice the omission, as they were satisfied on the main issue. The *mugɔme* erred somewhat as regards both the sum involved and the relationship of Mudana and Bodile; but the parties were impressed that he was only £1 out and, although they were not brothers, they were related through brothers. The wide connotation of terms and indefiniteness of conceptions lend themselves, as meanings and rigid categories in a European language cannot do, to manipulation by the *mugɔme* and ready acceptance by the parties of suggestions. In the *khɔrɔ*, the vanquished party often complains of the vague or incorrect indications as to totems and of other unsatisfactory features, but unless the 'ears' agrees, the *khɔrɔ* usually dismisses these objections, since, if he had really been dissatisfied, he would have demanded back the money from the *mugɔme* and proceeded to another. But it is necessary to add that the *mugɔme* often backs up his art with a very high-handed manner or behaviour. Some even beat witches that they have smelt out. It is usual for the diviner to shave one side of the head of the witch and to take from him his jacket or any other object of clothing he would like to have. To the accuser is given a buck's horn to blow on his way home as proof of his success and, when he enters the royal village to report, he is met with joyful trillings of women.

754 The attitude of people towards convicted witches depends largely upon the nature of the crime, but also upon the number of relatives of the injured party living in the neighbourhood. If he has harmed a number of people in the area, or if the injured party has many relatives to side with him, the witch may be forced by public opinion to leave the area. Malaji, who had caused the difficult birth and the death of the child of his lover, became very unpopular when the witchcraft had finally been attributed to him; from being one of the cheerful young bloods in the district, he became reserved and restrained, and shortly afterwards he left to work in town. But he was not ostracized by any one except the relatives of the injured woman and, when he returns, if we may judge from other cases, the whole matter will have blown over. On the whole, the attitude of the general public to a convicted witch is one of unconcern as long as his efforts have not been directed against them personally. People are accustomed to living in an atmosphere in which any one of their friends or relatives may turn out to be a witch. The atmosphere is

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girls below the age of puberty are sent to draw water for the *mufugo* which the queen's rain-doctor prepares for the occasion, and after a day or two, when the medicine froths up (*hu pukula*), boys are sent with a horn of *mufugo* and a brush of *khadi* creeper (*Adenia gummifera*) to every village in the land. First they heat medicine on the fire of the men's courtyard and thereafter on the threshold and hearth of every hut. The ashes are cleared away by an old woman, for so dangerous is the medicine used that any man, woman, or child entering the hut before it has been smeared with dung will *khuma* and be unable to have children. A new fire is kindled in the men's courtyard, whence each woman fetches a brand for her own hut, for it is taboo to kindle a fire from any other. In return for her firebrand, each woman gives the men stamped mealies or groundnuts, which they eat in the *khɔrɔ*. Each married man in turn must give something to the boys who have brought *mufugo*, usually 1*s.* or a fowl (in the old days an arrow or mealies), but often also tobacco or other gifts for, as '*mufugo* does not choose' (*mufugo a u khɔthe*), anything may be given. Each boy must give 1*s.* or a fowl to the keeper of *mufugo*, keeping the rest as a reward for his labours. It is taboo to work in the fields on the day after *mufugo*. In 1927 some boys, too lazy to fetch the medicine, took matters into their own hands and made a mixture of ash and water, which they used in their rounds. They were discovered and made to pay five head of cattle each and the ceremony had to be performed again.

When the divining bones diagnose drought as due to ancestors, steps have to be taken for a sacrifice at an ancestral grave. Any one of the close relatives of the queen can cause drought: sometimes it is the queen's mother Leakhali, buried at Khaḍa; sometimes it is Mugɔdɔ's sister, buried at Mudzinoni; in 1925–6 it was Mulogwane, the queen's brother, who complained that he was buried in the Christian cemetery, instead of in the shade of the forest. A sacrifice for rain will take place only after it has become clear that, in spite of steps taken to *lova* the queen by means of money or dancing, she fails by her ordinary methods to cause the rain to fall.

January, 1938, was hot and dry. Several headmen had been to *lova*, but no rain fell. Important district heads and councillors thus began to 'travel about, having the bones thrown', to discover the cause, while the queen herself also sent messengers to various well-known diviners. The reply came, 'Seek ye a black sheep. Go with it to show your care for the spirits and you shall see that it will rain nicely.' As is so often the case, no indication was given of the cause of their complaint; the suggestion as to the practical measures to be taken and the identity of the troublesome spirits were quite sufficient. The queen, however, remained inactive; it was not for her to take the initiative till her people humbly begged her to do so. On February 11th three of the most important men at the capital approached her, saying, 'People are crying. Help us.' Thereupon she impatiently replied, 'People tire me. The year was well established, but they have "weakened" (*hu fighɔla*) it. They want me to be troubled.' She implied that she had safeguarded the year, but that the people themselves, by breaking rain taboos and by their evil works and witchcraft, had undermined that safeguard. When the councillors continued

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787 pleading, she relented and said, 'Find me a black sheep without blemish
643 [colour].' The first messenger they sent returned without success, but
789 two others were dispatched to scour the country and on the seventeenth one was found. Kheshidwa, the rain-doctor, was now called. Four days passed, but he did not come. Then the queen, angry at the delay, suggested that she should proceed with the ceremony alone. But this the councillors would not hear of; 'You might deviate from the procedure the bones indicate to be essential,' they said. On the fifth day, however, Kheshidwa arrived, explaining his delay as due to the number of medicines he had to find, and at dawn on February 23rd the ceremony took place.

643 A calabash containing *mafuga* was placed in a basket for the chief wife
789 of the queen's brother to carry, and a procession of most of the inmates of the royal village set out with the sheep. They stopped first at a clump of trees near the village, where lies Moyamudupi, a female relative by marriage to the queen on the mother's brother's side. When the queen ordered her chief councillor, as direct representative of the mother's brother's side, to begin, he uncorked the calabash and poured some of its contents over the grave, saying, 'Stop for us these winds and tribulations, that it may rain nicely. They say it is you people whose murmurings are impeding the rain.' His younger sister next took the calabash, praying in almost identical words, followed by the queen herself, who said, 'Aye, we say, stop for us all these *pukudi* [winds from wrong burials] that rain may fall and people find corn.' The people now respectfully greeted (*hu lɔsha*), repeating the praise of Muhale, the king of old, and, during the trillings that followed, the rain-doctor said, 'The frogs do not cry, sire. I do not hear them'; he may have meant that it was so dry that even the frogs were silent, but we do not know for certain.

The procession now proceeded to Maulwi, the sacred grove where are buried members of the royal family and the two last queens. At the grave of Mathukha, mother's brother to the queen and father of the chief councillor, they all sat down while the same procedure was gone through as at the other grave. When it was the queen's turn to pray, she took a small horn wrapped up in rags and placed it on the grave. Then, pouring from the calabash, she prayed, 'Do not continue to hold my arms; leave me to do my things, that rain may fall and people have corn. Tell one another, tell every single one, also the old woman [meaning Leukhali, her mother] and Mujaji, "huckster in the hut", who "casts away some and shares others with the vultures" [Mujaji I]. Do not continue leaving us to be burnt by the sun. As for our health, we are reasonably well; we are merely troubled by the poverty you have left us.' She poured out all the *mafuga*, turning the calabash upside down beside the horn, while the assembled company did obeisance and ululated. The sheep was slaughtered and skinned and small pieces, cut from various parts of the body, were placed in an earthen bowl while the doctor, sitting some distance away, began squeezing the stomach contents to separate the liquid from the more solid part. When he had finished, the chief councillor, his sister, and the queen placed the meat on the grave, telling the gods, 'We approach (*hu nwa*) you with this sheep.' The solid stomach contents

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
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cause the latter to die by aggravating his illness. Similarly a man's mistress must avoid coming near the hut of his wife when she is ill or in childbirth, lest the mistress's sinister track endanger the life of the wife.

Makhuma (from *ku khuma*, to mix) is a concept which uses the analogy of contamination by mixture or contact to account for physical weakening, wasting away or enfeeblement (*ku figchela*). The situations that constitute the chief source of *makhuma* are critical transitions in the life of the individual as well as serious crises such as severe illnesses. The evil contaminates or infects the person who has undergone the change or who, in the case of death, comes into contact with its baneful influence. He seems to suffer from loss of vitality, or to become dislocated because of the change in his condition.

The measures taken to combat *makhuma* are in the first instance preventive. Strengthening medicines are administered or inoculated to fortify the individual by anticipation; thereafter, under isolating conditions that are gradually relaxed, an adjustment is made to the new situation. Thus novices in the various initiations are medically treated in anticipation of their susceptibility to *khuma* on entering their new condition. Babies are fortified (*ku thusa*, to be helped) by scarification and steaming before they leave the hut of confinement; kin and other inmates of the village must after a death be readjusted by means of medicines and other treatment to the change caused by the death lest they *khuma*. *Makhuma* also affects possessed people who fail to use medicine with the first-fruits. A man will *khuma* if he cohabits with a woman after the death of her child unless she has first been medically purified, and she must also be careful not to give food to other children before treatment lest they get ill and die. If one baby dies, any illness its successor may have is liable to be diagnosed as due to *makhuma*. Even cattle may *khuma* after a death in the village or if a woman enters the cattle fold.

By logical extension and the invocation of a further series of presuppositions the concept is applied to the bones of a diviner, which are liable to *khuma* (lose their diagnostic powers) every month—they are said to 'see their moons'—or when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again. Similarly the queen's rain-medicine will *khuma* unless given the first termites and first-fruits, or when people neglect observances connected with the burial of those who are 'hot'.

The evils differently conceptualized in the notions of 'heat', *makhuma* and 'shadow' have this in common: they are all instances of a ritual impurity, generated by certain states or conditions, not because of their morally reprehensible nature but because of their abnormality or their relation to reproductive processes or critical changes in life. 'Heat' and 'shadow' appear to be different aspects of the same kind of ritual impurity, but 'shadow' is dangerous only to someone whose resistance is low because of illness or immaturity, while 'heat' may have deleterious effects not only on healthy people but on natural phenomena, on ancestor spirits, and on

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
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An omen or bane (*lesola*) presages death or disaster, but it may itself be the cause of the evil that follows. An owl hooting outside a hut, cats crying plaintively (not caterwauling) at night, presage disaster, for cats have uncanny insight; a mountain snake can be a *lesola*, and so can a *leshega*, i.e. a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order. A person will *fola* another, i.e. cause misfortune or death to descend upon a member of the latter's family, by swearing badly at him, especially if the words are out of all proportion to the offence or provocation.

These concepts of natural luck, accident, and omens are thus also linked with human relationships. Good relations with near relatives may bring you good luck, bad relations, especially with your father or father's sister, bad luck or illness to your children. In fact any man who despises the great, particularly his father, will, it is said, see him in the bones as the cause of his misfortune, especially if the old man dies before a reconciliation has been effected. An old man's scolding or curse is an omen (*vusola*) which portends and causes misfortune to a near relative of the person scolded, and the grievance of one's sister or father's sister, even if it is unconscious, generates a force (*mahava*) which brings illness upon one's children and which can be neutralized only by a religious rite. The exact relation between *mahava* and the ancestors is not very clear. The Lovedu conceive *mahava* as following automatically from the bad relationship between important kin. Yet reconciliation, which removes the source of the *mahava*, is not enough for putting matters right. It is the ancestors that must remove the illness at the request of the aggrieved party.

Witchcraft and Sorcery (Vulsi)

The evils that have so far been mentioned are either inherent in nature or only vaguely brought into relation with the conduct and relationships between men. Their effects except in a few cases are mild, rarely ending in death. In a completely different category is the greatest and most devastating source of evil *vulsi* (witchcraft and sorcery), brought about directly by man. *Vulsi* is, by Lovedu conceptions, always due to the conscious, evil practices of man and is directed at persons he has reason to hate.[1] *Vulsi* is morally reprehensible, and witches and sorcerers are the arch enemies of society. The concept of *vulsi* explains evil in terms of the malicious wickedness in men's hearts; it is criminality incarnate in man. The term *vulsi* covers both witchcraft and sorcery; nevertheless the Lovedu make a clear distinction between witchcraft (*vulsi rya vusiu*—night witchcraft) and sorcery (*vulsi rya matsiave*—day witchcraft). The night-witch uses sinister inherited powers which extend beyond the ordinary course of nature. The sorcerer uses the natural, known powers of medicine for anti-social ends. Witchcraft implies possession of power to do evil transcending the under-

[1] Neighbouring Venda and Tsonga conceive the witch as constrained to evil by heredity but unconscious of his own evil acts.

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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Lobedu themselves. The society is remarkably egalitarian and there is no concentration of wealth in the hands of the ruling group. Nor would this be easy in a tribe in which the limited resources in property (in cattle) are used primarily for, and are constantly being converted into, marriage alliances.

Other distinctive features of the Lobedu are their marked agricultural bias; a fertility cult with sacred drums; masked dancing; ritual arrangements in ancestor worship (in the form of impersonation of the spirits, the predominance of beer offerings and the *phasa* rite of spurting water out of the mouth as an accompaniment to prayer) which link them more closely to the tribes to the north than to their southern Nguni and Sotho neighbours where the blood sacrifice and cattle cult are more clearly marked.

Agnatic Groupings

Despite the fact that they are ruled by a queen and that women can and do hold important political and religious positions the Lobedu are a patrilineal people in the sense that a man belongs to his father's lineage, property is inherited in the male line and marriage is patrilocal. The tribe is made up of a large number of different totemic groups, Lion, Elephant, Crocodile, Wild Pig, none of which, not even the royal Lobedu totem, is confined to the Lobedu tribe. All these totems are found in neighbouring tribes and many also in other parts of the Transvaal and elsewhere. A few groups have no totem (*motupo*) but designate themselves by their place of origin, e.g., *Mokhalaga*. Groups which have the same totem do not consider themselves related if they come from different places of origin. Elephant of Khalaga are thus unrelated to Elephant of Tsubye or Elephant of Thobolo. People sometimes swear by (*ana*) their totem and are supposed to but do not always abstain from eating it. The totemic name is useful only as a distinguishing mark; e.g., in divination the bones may indicate a person of the Elephant or Lion totem as responsible for illness or theft. Beyond this the *motupo* has little meaning and today many of the young people do not even use the term. The totemic group is not exogamous.

The lineage has no distinguishing name, the term *moloko* or

The lineage has no distinguishing name, the term *mokoko* or *leloko* which is in common use referring to the group of agnates as well as to the relatives on the mother's side of the family. The lineage segment of four to five generations tracing its descent from a common male ancestor (grandfather of the adult males) shares a common major shrine and occasionally meets at the harvest thanksgiving or when a *makhobo* (a gathering of the descendants of a particular common ancestor) is indicated by the diviner as the wish of a troublesome spirit. Such a group of agnates of four to five generations in depth tends to be concentrated in the same locality and in many cases may be found in the same homestead (*motse*). As neighbours and relatives they share in many common activities such as helping in each other's work-parties, taking part in girls' puberty ceremonies, consulting each other in the marriage of their sons and daughters. Only in the minimal lineage of father and sons are there jural ties. The lineage is not a land-owning unit, has no political functions, is not exogamous, marriage within the lineage being common especially in the Lobedu royal group.

An interesting feature of the Lobedu lineage is the important part played by its women who continue even after marriage to be active in lineage affairs as leaders in religious ritual and as guardians over their brothers' households. The merging of the ancestors on the father's and mother's side of the family which results from preferential marriage with the mother's uterine brother's daughter and the inclusion in ancestor worship of relatives on both sides, which will be described later, also affect the character of the lineage. A religious gathering (*makhobo*) of the descendants of Sekhobo which I attended showed the lineage segment of five generations in operation and illustrated some of these points. Descendants through both sons and daughters in the line of Sekhobo's chief wife took part in the ceremony and, in addition to calling upon the deceased father and other male ascendants of the head of the lineage, the officiator mentioned by name also the deceased father's uterine sisters and the father's mother. The inclusion of the father's mother was all the more remarkable because this was a gathering of the descendants of Sekhobo and it had been the specific complaint of the troubling ancestor that every year harvest beer was being offered to the spirits on the father's mother's